

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MUSCAT 00465 040917Z
ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01
CIAE-00 DODE-00 DOE-15 H-01 INR-10 INT-05 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05 ICA-11 OES-07 SP-02
SS-15 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 PA-01 /139 W
-----098147 050103Z /63

R 040709Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4197
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
USDOC WASHDC

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ATHENS FOR RTDO

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELTN, ENRG, MU
SUBJECT: PDO PIPELINE FROM SOUTHERN OIL FIELDS TO GO TO MUSCAT
INSTEADOF SALALAH

1. SOURCES IN MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND IN PETROLEUM DEV-
ELOPMENT OMAN (PDO) HAVETOLD US THAT A SWITCH HAS
JUST TAKEN PLACE IN PLANNINGRCOR OIL PIPELINE TO BE BUILT FROM
PDO'S NEWLY DEVELOPED FIELDS IN SOUTHERN OMAN. INSTEADOF
GOING SOUTHWEST THROUGH DHOFAR JEBEL TO RAYSUT PORT NEAR
SALALAH, PIPELINE WILL GO NORTHEAST TO FAHUD, WHERE IT WILL
LINK WITH EXISTING PDO PIPELINE PASSING THROUGH NORTHERN
OMAN MOUNTAINS TO TERMINAL FACILITIES IN MUSCAT AREA.

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2. APPARENTLY THIS DECISION WAS MADE WITHIN GOVERNMENT
LESS THAN A WEEK AGO AND COMMUNICATED AS FAIT ACCOMPLI
TO PDO MANAGEMENT ON MARCH 29 OR 30. THE SWITCH IS NOT
YET PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, BUT AN ANNOUNCEMENT IS EXPECTED
SOON.

3. REASON FOR THE SUDDEN CHANGE IS UNCLEAR. HOWEVER, APART

FROM TIME AND EFFORT WASTED ON OLD ROUTE, PDO IS QUITE HAPPY WITH THE NEW PLAN, FOR IT CONFORMS TO WHAT PDO ENGINEERS HAD ADVOCATED ORIGINALLY. WHILE PIPELINE TO FAHUD IS LONGER THAN ONE TO RAYSUT, IT IS SIMPLER TO BUILD BECAUSE IT DOES NOT TRAVERSE ANY MOUNTAINS. HEAVY SOUTHERN CRUDE CAN EASILY BE MIXED AT FAHUD WITH PDO'S LIGHT NORTHERN CRUDE, AND BOTH WILL THEN GO TO TERMINAL ALREADY IN PLACE AT MUSCAT. THUS, INVESTMENT UNDER NEW PLAN IS REDUCED. MOREOVER, POTENTIAL DAMAGE TO FRAGILE ECOLOGY OF DHOFAR JEBEL WAS A WORRY TO SOME PEOPLE INVOLVED IN PROJECT, AND THIS PROBLEM IS NOW COMPLETELY REMOVED.

4. SINCE RECENT SUPPLEMENTARY DISCOVERIES BY PDO IN ITS SOUTHERN FIELDS ARE YIELDING LIGHTER CRUDE THAN EARLIER DISCOVERIES, HEAVINESS OF THE CRUDE THAT WILL PASS THROUGH THE NEW PIPELINE IS LESSENER. PIPELINE MAY HAVE TO BE HEATED LESS THAN WAS PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT, AND POSSIBLY IT WILL NOT HAVE TO BE HEATED AT ALL. MOOD WITHIN PDO ABOUT THE SOUTHERN FIELDS IS SIGNIFICANTLY MORE UPBEAT THAN BEFORE, THOUGH DISCOVERIES THERE ARE STILL THOUGHT TO BE RELATIVELY SMALL IN SIZE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PIPELINES, OIL FIELDS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MUSCAT00465
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780146-0169
Format: TEL
From: MUSCAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780495/aaaadcwv.tel
Line Count: 84
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: ddac09b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3082387
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PDO PIPELINE FROM SOUTHERN OIL FIELDS TO GO TO MUSCAT INSTEADOF SALALAH
TAGS: ELTN, ENRG, MU
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ddac09b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014